

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

NOVEMBER 6, 2007

On October 12, 2007, several agencies including the Los Angeles County Fire Department responded to a tragic fire in a truck tunnel on the Golden State Freeway near the Antelope Valley Freeway in Santa Clarita. This fire was exceptionally challenging for first responders due to the size of the fire, the limited access caused by the length of the tunnel, the lack of an adequate water source and the volume of smoke and gas particulates generated by the fire.

While our Fire Department does not regulate the construction of public roads and highways, they have provided fire protection and life safety recommendations to the California Department of Transportation based on their firefighting experiences in a letter dated October 19, 2007 (Attachment 1).

The recommendations are to provide:

- A mechanical ventilation system utilizing large exhaust fans for the removal of smoke. This technology has been incorporated into the construction of the two tunnels connecting the 105 and 405 freeways in Hawthorne and Los Angeles. If mechanical ventilation is not feasible, then a passive vertical ventilation system halfway through the tunnel with exhaust outlets located in the median of the freeway should be evaluated as an alternative;
- A water supply and appliances near the entrance and exit of the tunnel for firefighting purposes. A fire flow of 1,250 gallons per minute for 2 hours would be a minimum recommended design level;

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- A zoned manually-operated water/foam based deluge system installed throughout the length of the tunnel;
- An emergency lighting system; and
- A traffic control system with a means to stop approaching traffic from entering the tunnel following activation of a fire alarm within the tunnel.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Executive Officer to prepare a five-signature letter to the California Department of Transportation requesting that they consider and implement the recommendations made by the Los Angeles County Fire Department when they repair the truck tunnel on the Golden State Freeway.

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MDA:sn



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1320 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN
FIRE CHIEF
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

October 19, 2007

Mr. Doug Failing, District Director
California Department of Transportation
100 S. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Failing:

The purpose of this communiqué is to provide fire protection and life safety recommendations to the California Department of Transportation regarding increasing the tunnel safety during the repair of the truck tunnel on the Golden State Freeway near the Antelope Valley Freeway.

On October 12, 2007, this Department responded to a tragic fire in the tunnel which illustrated the need for increased fire and life safety systems in confined spaces. During the fire, access was made unduly difficult due to the length of the tunnel, the size of fire within the tunnel, and the volume of smoke and gas particulates generated. An additional factor that limited firefighting operations was the lack of an adequate supply of water.

Although the Los Angeles County Fire Department does not regulate the construction of public roads and highways, the following suggested recommendations are based on the experiences of firefighting personnel who responded to the incident.

The recommendations that warrant consideration for the tunnel should be:

- Provide a mechanical ventilation system utilizing large exhaust fans for the removal of smoke. This technology has been incorporated into the construction of the two tunnels connecting the 105 and 405 freeways in Hawthorne and Los Angeles. If mechanical ventilation is not feasible, then a passive vertical ventilation system halfway through the tunnel with exhaust outlets located in the median of the freeway should be evaluated as an alternative.

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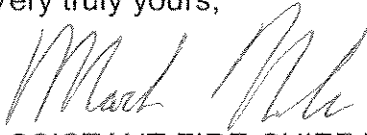
Mr. Doug Failing
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- Provide a water supply and appliances near the entrance and exit of the tunnel for firefighting purposes. A fire flow of 1250 gallons per minute for 2 hours would be a minimum recommended design level.
- Provide a zoned manually operated water/foam based deluge system installed throughout the length of the tunnel.
- Provide an emergency lighting system.
- Provide a traffic control system with a means to stop approaching traffic from entering the tunnel following activation of a fire alarm within the tunnel.

Thank you again for the assistance of your agency in bringing this incident to a close.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (323) 890-4144.

Very truly yours,



ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF MARK NELSON
FIRE MARSHAL

MN:pm

bc: Freeman
Lockhart
Poster